

Recommendations of the External Advisory Board of EXTEMIT-K after meeting Feb 6, 2017

The EAB got a very positive impression of the multi-faceted EXTEMIT-K team. The leaders have put together competence from several relevant research directions and the possibilities for advancements in these fields are great. The direct leadership of Professor Schlyter is highly positive for the construction of the scientific environment and the active participation of Professor Turcani ensures a strong link to the leadership of the faculty as well as a local scientific connection. To support the development of the program we supply the following recommendations:

- This project should represent outstanding research both at an applied and a basic level. Considering the money at play the thinking has to be “out of the box” and the plans have to make use of the diversity of the team participants.
- A clear challenge in the program will be to actually build a team. This should be at the centre of attention, especially at these early stages. Specific attention should be put on mechanisms increasing interactions between team members, e.g. joint coffee breaks, seminars, retreats.
- An important aspect for the team building is the establishment of highly active internal communication and modern tools supporting it. The team should use all available means to accomplish this.
- One good way to ensure participation of the whole team would be to circulate a one-page document describing every new experiment to the complete team with obligatory comments.
- The team should build a very clear map over all the different parts of the program and their interaction. A time axis should also be part of the map. This will allow instant visualization and easy follow-up of expected and real progress and will form the base for decisions and resource allocation.
- The plans for the future work should be very clear and the research questions well formulated. Data should not be collected without a very clear idea why they are collected and which the underlying hypotheses to be examined are.
- It will be important with constant self-reflection and comparison with the rest of the world. The development of the project should be dynamic and should constantly adjust to reality.
- Within the program mentoring of new members (PhD students, postdocs, junior leaders) will be very important. This should also include on-boarding of foreign team members, as well as career advice for all categories.
- The EAB appreciates the gender representation within the team. The balance could be further improved and should be present at all levels.
- Access to PhD students is vital to the program and for future supply of competence in the field. Different avenues to ensure this should be explored. The faculty will supply some positions, but e.g. an EU ITN network could be applied for in addition¹.
- A common data management system should be established within the program providing all participants with access to data. This will establish a strong basis for scientific cross-fertilization within the program.
- An active outreach program at all levels is vital. The program needs to communicate its activities and results to e.g. foresters, forest companies, the government, schools, interested laymen and fellow scientists. A highly diversified website is thus vital but also printed material in different shapes and languages.

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/research/mariecurieactions/about/innovative-training-networks_en